

REMARKS

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-5, 7 and 9 are all the claims pending in the application. Claim 6 is canceled by this amendment. Applicants note that claim 8 was canceled in the amendment filed on August 9, 2004.

Applicants note that the Examiner has not returned the PTO-1449 form submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on August 9, 2004. Applicants are enclosing a copy of the above mentioned Information Disclosure Statement, a copy of the PTO-1449 form submitted therewith, and a copy of the stamped postcard receipt from the PTO indicating that the Information Disclosure Statement was received on August 9, 2004 by the PTO. In view of the foregoing, Applicants kindly request that the Examiner consider the references listed on the PTO-1449 form and return the initialed and signed form with the next Office paper.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claim 6 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have amended base claim 1 so as to include all of the features recited in claim 6. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is in immediate condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully requested.

II. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-5, 7 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Tashiro et al. (U.S. 6,705,774).

As noted above, Applicants have amended claim 1 so as to include the features recited in claim 6. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is patentable over the cited prior art, an indication of which is respectfully requested. Claims 2-5 depend from claim 1 and are therefore considered patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

Regarding claims 7 and 9, Applicants note that these claims have also been amended so as to include the features recited in allowable claim 6. Accordingly, as Tashiro does not disclose or suggest such features, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 7 and 9 are patentable over the cited prior art, an indication of which is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may best be resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Tetsurou KAJINO et al.

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